(c) whether according to some scientists 15 more glaciers in the same basin are also facing extinction; and

(d) if so, the measures that Government are taking to save these glaciers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Change in the size of glaciers is a cyclic process observed all over the wold. The studies carried out by Geological Survey of India have revealed that the majority of Himalayan glaciers are passing through a phase of recession, which could be attributed to various reasons including global warming.

(b) and (c) According to Department of Space, Indian Space Scientists have monitored glaciers in the Baspa basin using data of Indian Remote Sensing Satellites. The retreat of snow line on glaciers was monitored using weekly satellite data during 2000 to 2002 and 2004. It was observed that the snow line at the end of summer season was higher than maximum glacial altitude for four glaciers. For remaining 15 glaciers, snow line at the end of summer season was lower than maximum glacial altitude.

(d) In order to develop proper understanding of glaciers, the Government has commissioned a few studies including a comprehensive programme on the inventory of glaciers, fluctuation in their sizes and mass balance.

TV Mumbai (Middle-Vaitarana) water supply project

3927. SHRI BALAVANT ALIAS BAL APTE:
SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have since approved the Maharashtra Government proposal for environmental clearance of TV Mumbai (Middle-Vaitarana) water supply project;

(b) whether the World Bank has indicated willingness to provide assistance for this project, if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the original estimated cost of the project as per original report of the Tata Consulting Engineers of 1992 and the cost escalation suffered thereby, so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and ((b) Central Government has not received any proposal from the Maharashtra Government for environmental clearance of TV Mumbai (Middle-Vaitarana) water supply project. However Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) forwarded the project report in respect of IV Mumbai (Middle-Vaitarana) water supply project to the Ministry of Urban Development in the Government of India seeking financial assistance from the Wold Bank. MCGM was asked to obtain prior clearances, from Central Water Commission and the Ministry of Environment and Forests before submission to the world bank for financial assistance.

(c) As per the information received from the Government of Maharashtra, the original estimated cost of the IV Mumbai (Middle-Vaitarana) water supply project in 1992 and the revised cost estimate in 2002 are Rs. 570 crores and Rs. 1250 crores respectively.

Licence to sandalwood oil distillation units

3928. SHRIMATI BIMBA RAIKAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Empowered Committee constituted by the Supreme Court has called for the cancellation of all licences to sandalwood oil distillation units;

(b) whether sandalwood oil factories are being run under licence granted under various Act like Boilers Act, Factories Act and Panchayat Act, etc.; and

(c) whether the Court has observed that the unhindered functioning of these units was possible only with the political patronage and total in action of the State Government functionaries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir. However, 23 sandalwood factories functioning illegally in the State of Kerala were ordered to be closed down vide Government of Kerala's G.O. (MS) No. 17/ 2005/F&WLD dated 09.02.2005 on the report of the Central Empowered Committee. Now, no sandal distillation units are functioning in the State of Kerala.